

Re Item V

**Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step, and industrial
applicability; documents and explanations supporting such statement**

Reference is made to the following documents:

- D1: US-A-3,067,464 (Raymund Nicholson Frank), December 11, 1962 (12/11/62)
D2: Patent Abstracts of Japan, Vol. 2002, No. 02, April 2, 2002 (04/02/02), and JP 2001
293767 A (Toshiba Mach. Co. Ltd.), October 23, 2001 (10/23/01)
D3: Patent Abstracts of Japan, Vol. 0142, No. 09 (M-0968), April 27, 1990 (04/27/90) and
JP 02 047030 A (Sumitomo Heavy Ind. Ltd.), February 16, 1990 (02/16/90)
D4: US-B1-6,663,375 (Ulcej, John A.), December 16, 2003 (12/16/03).

Document D1 is regarded as the most proximate prior art with respect to the subject matter of Claim 1. The cited document discloses the following (information in parentheses refers to this document):

Extrusion die having at least one flexible lip element for discharging extruded material from a gap, the flow cross section of which can be modified, wherein at least one flexible lip element can be moved relative to the other lip element by means of a plurality of jointly actuatable lever elements.

The subject matter of Claim 1 therefore differs from the known die, in that the plurality of lever elements on one end is supported in a groove in the exit region, and on the other end pivotably engages with a slide in the die body or a retaining element associated therewith, the slide being supported with respect to the die body and/or the retaining element.

The subject matter of Claim 1 is therefore novel (Article 33(2), PCT).

The object to be achieved by the present invention may therefore be regarded as reducing the large forces necessary to move the die body, and ensuring a joint homogeneous and uniform modification of the gap over the entire width in a single operating step (see

Description, page 2, paragraph 1).

The approach proposed for this object in Claim 1 of the present invention is based on inventive step (Article 33(3), PCT) for the following reasons:

The combination of features according to the approach of Claim 1 is not known from the existing prior art (for example, D1, D2, D3, and D4). Consequently, one skilled in the art obtains no information therein on the use of said features for achieving the underlying object.

Claims 2 through 12 are dependent on Claim 1, and therefore likewise meet the requirements of the PCT with regard to novelty and inventive step.

Re Item VI (Document P)

Document D4, identified in the Search Report as Document P, is not considered to represent prior art if the claimed priority date can be allowed for the relevant sections of the present application.